

### *National health reform proposal includes innovative Vermont solutions*

Several initiatives authored by Rep. Peter Welch have been incorporated into a draft health care reform bill unveiled late last week by the House Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Education and Labor committees.

The bill, which will serve as the basis for health reform legislation in the House, includes Welch's "Accountable Care Promotion Act of 2009," which he first outlined at South Burlington's Aesculapius Medical Center in May. The Welch initiative creates financial incentives to promote quality and efficiency of care, rather than volume and intensity of services.

The bill also includes language promoting medical homes, a key component of Welch's Blueprint for Health Act of 2009, and it outlines a public health insurance option very similar to the model presented by Welch's Choice in Health Options Insures Care for Everyone (CHOICE) Act of 2009.

"This bill recognizes the most important principle of health care reform: that in order to provide universal access to quality health care, we must reign in unsustainably escalating costs. With this proposal, we are on our way to creating a health care system that works for all Americans," Welch said.

"I'm pleased this bill includes so many groundbreaking Vermont ideas and solutions. By following Vermont's innovative lead, we will be all the more likely to succeed at reforming our nation's health care system," Welch added.

### **Welch priorities and the House health reform bill:**

**Accountable Care Promotion Act of 2009** - The House bill includes in its entirety the Accountable Care Promotion Act, which was cosponsored by Welch and Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND). Based on pioneering research by the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy, this bill

recognizes that increased spending on health care does not correlate to better health outcomes. It creates 'accountable care organizations' whose payment systems reward the quality and efficiency of care, rather than the volume and intensity of services.

**Blueprint for Health Act of 2009** - The House bill includes language promoting patient-centered medical homes which compensate primary care providers for managing and coordinating their patients' care. Like Congressman Welch's Blueprint for Health Act and the Vermont program of the same name, the bill emphasizes prevention and wellness programs to better manage chronic conditions and encourage patients to proactively manage their own care.

**Choice in Health Options Insures Care for Everyone (CHOICE) Act of 2009** - The House bill calls for a public health insurance option similar to what Welch, Rep. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) called for in the CHOICE Act. This public plan would compete with private insurers on a level playing field, providing additional choices for consumers and driving down health costs by facilitating competition between health plans. Subject to the same market reforms and consumer protections as private plans, it would be self-sustaining and financed only by its premiums.

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce, on which Welch serves, will begin holding hearings on the legislation this week.

[Click here](#) for a summary of the House draft and [here](#) for the full bill text.